

of the week. I get to come down to the Senate floor typically every Thursday and talk about Alaskans who are doing something amazing for their communities, their State, maybe even their country. Heck, this one is kind of doing something for the world, whom I refer to as the Alaskan of the Week. I love doing it.

We have a really special Alaskan of the Week this week whom I am going to talk about, Lydia Jacoby—a very special 17-year-old who is from Seward, AK. We are so excited about this.

Those of you who have been following our Alaskan of the Week speeches might notice that this is the first new poster board we have had ever. So this is the poster board of the Alaskan of the Week for Lydia because we are so excited about her.

Before I talk about Lydia, I always like to say a little bit about what is going on in Alaska.

A lot of people always ask about the light. They are curious about the light in the summer, particularly as we just had our summer solstice. If you want to come up and really see it, come on up. We are open. We would love to have you—a trip of a lifetime. If you are thinking about coming to Alaska, come to see it yourself this summer. Every American should come on up, but I will give you a hint. On the light that is happening right now, if you were in Seward, AK, where Lydia is from, the Sun will rise at 4:33 a.m. and set at 11:26 p.m., with a loss of just 36 seconds from the summer solstice, which occurred a few days ago. That is a lot of sunlight, and it doesn't really even get dark when the Sun goes down. It does just for a little bit.

So it is a great time to be in the State. Come on up. It is a great time to be in Alaska, and I can't wait to get home for the recess, our Fourth of July—lots of Sun, lots of excitement.

There is particularly a lot of excitement around this young, intrepid Alaskan, Lydia, who on Tuesday, in Omaha, NE, swam the second fastest time in the world in the women's 100-meter breaststroke finals in the Olympic trials. She is the second fastest breaststroker in the world, and she is only 17. This cinched her spot to represent the United States in the Summer Olympics in Tokyo. This is an incredible and—I will admit it—a rather unlikely story that we are all so proud of in Alaska.

With regard to the Olympics, Alaskans typically punch way above our weight. In the Winter Olympics, we really, really punch above our weight, with many, many Alaskans making the Olympic team for the Winter Olympics every 4 years. We have done well in the Summer Olympics as well. Olympic veteran, rugby player Alev Kelter, from Eagle River, will be competing this year. Shortly, will we will be learning if Allie Ostrander, who is a really amazing young woman, steeplechase champion and another incredible athlete, will be in the Olympics this

year. We will learn soon. But we have never sent a swimmer to the Olympics. You don't always equate Alaska and swimming. She will be the first, and Alaskans across the State are cheering on Lydia. So let me tell you a little bit about this remarkable young woman.

Her parents, Leslie and Richard, are both boat camp captains. Leslie is the educational coordinator for the Marine Science Explorer Program at the Kenai Fjords Tours. Rich is a maritime instructor at the Alaska Vocational Technical Center, what we call AVTEC.

By the way, a little aside: AVTEC does great work. I have really enjoyed my visits there.

So, Rich, keep up the great job there. He is also a guy for Arctic and Antarctic trips.

So that is Mom and Dad. They moved to Alaska when Lydia was 9 years old. Richard came to the State in 1992 when he was fresh out of college, and like so many, they fell in love with the State and stayed. They raised their daughter, as I mentioned, in the town of Seward, AK. There are a little under 3,000 people there, and it is just an hour south of Anchorage. It is nestled between Resurrection Bay and soaring mountains. Its motto is "Alaska starts here."

I love Seward, AK. I get there as much as I can. I am going to be there in a couple of weeks, actually. It is known for stunning landscapes, a strong, generous community, and amazing people. So if you are visiting Alaska, you have to go to Seward.

Leslie and Richard signed Lydia up for swim classes when she was just a toddler. She joined the swim club when she was 6 years old. When she was 10, she was selected for the Alaska Swim Zone Team. State qualifying meets allowed her to go on trips. In between all of this, she was a musician, learning to play the guitar. She played at folk festivals. She was also in theater and in track—an all-around great athlete and an all-around great young woman.

As she excelled at swimming, her parents continued to be, in their words, "surprised and amazed." Obviously, she has a deeply competitive streak, but you would not know it when you meet her. Her parents were surprised. "In the right setting, that streak can really be turned on," Rich said. When she has a lousy race, she just shrugs it off. Her dad remembered one of her first swim meets when, halfway across the pool, she inhaled some water. She jumped out and didn't want to get back in. Well, she is back in. As her dad said, she has come a long way.

One of her coaches, Solomon D'Amico, describes her as "kind, quiet, confident." He says she has an "intense fire," and when she sets her mind to something, like the Olympics, she goes for it.

Now, neither of her parents pushed her too hard—they wanted the drive to come from her, not them—but it certainly did come from her.

Solomon, her coach, is a former marine and athlete. Alaska is full of in-

tense runs—marathons, ultra-marathons—but one of the most challenging is in Seward, AK. It is called the annual Mount Marathon Race, the Fourth of July, in Seward, a grueling 1.5-mile climb almost straight up and straight back down Mount Marathon. He has run this 24 years in a row. That is tough—Solomon, her coach.

Solomon really didn't know much about swimming when he started coaching the small Seward swim team. In fact, Seward, AK, doesn't even have an Olympic-size swimming pool, but they all worked hard. He encouraged them to be the best that they could be—to enjoy life but to also lift weights. Strength, Solomon said, is needed to excel in swimming, particularly at the breaststroke.

Lydia took to the weight rooms. She swims between 5 to 7 days a week, 1-hour to 90-minute sessions. She lifts weights about 3 hours a week. And as Solomon has said, "You want . . . athletes to be more process than outcome driven."

Lydia fell in love with all the hard work. No one was ever going to give her a hard time if she missed a practice or a session, but every single opportunity she had to swim, she would be there.

Well, on Sunday, Lydia will head to Hawaii to train with Team USA. Then, a few weeks later, she will head to Tokyo.

Now, because of COVID restrictions, unfortunately, her parents won't be there to watch in person. Her father said: "It's a [bit of a] weird thing to send your kid across the world. But she's an experienced traveler and there are great people involved with USA swimming."

"We are over the moon proud of her," her dad said.

So are we. We are so proud of you, Lydia. You are a role model for so many aspiring swimmers, not just across Alaska but across the country. So thank you for representing Alaska and our Nation so well.

Good luck in the Olympics. Congratulations on your success and congratulations on being our Alaskan of the Week.

DEFENSE BUDGET

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, as my colleague from Oklahoma Senator LANKFORD just gave a wonderful speech on the Fourth of July, we are all focused on heading home for the Fourth of July, celebrating freedom, celebrating our independence, celebrating liberty.

And we all know that that freedom is not free. There is a saying at the Korean War Memorial, etched in stone, that says those very words: "Freedom is not free."

The sacrifices of our military are something that all of us are going to be thinking about over the course of the Fourth of July week, weekend, as we

celebrate and commemorate American liberty, American independence, and American freedom.

Our military has helped us provide that, both here at home but also, importantly, abroad.

I had the opportunity to go on a congressional delegation—Senate delegation with two of my Senate colleagues, Senator COONS and Senator DUCKWORTH, a couple weeks ago to Korea—South Korea and Taiwan.

And it doesn't matter where you are from in America, whether you are a Democrat or a Republican, when you go overseas and you go to countries like that, countries and places that literally exist because of the sacrifice of the American military, it makes you humble, and it makes you proud.

South Korea and Taiwan—vibrant economics, vibrant democracies. And if you know the history, those two places wouldn't be that way if it weren't for the sacrifice, literally, of tens of thousands of Americans.

It is no exaggeration to say—whether it is in those places or in places at home or in Europe or in Asia—that the United States has been one of the most powerful forces for liberating humankind from oppression and tyranny than any other force in the world.

Think about it. Hundreds of millions of people across the world and in our own country, over the decades, have been liberated by men and women wearing the uniform of the United States.

As we contemplate the Fourth of July week, weekend, that is something every American can take pride in and should take pride in.

But as we all know, freedom is not free. Many of us think that defending our Nation should be our priority No. 1 as part of our job in the U.S. Senate. Budgets are a reflection of an administration's values and priorities.

And if you look at this budget—this is the \$6 trillion blowout budget of the Biden administration, where up here you have every single Federal Agency with double-digit—20-percent increases, 40-percent increases, 15-percent increases across the board.

The two Agencies charged with the national security of our Nation, the Department of Defense and Homeland Security, in terms of priorities for this administration, are dead last.

Actually, if you adjust the budgets for inflation, these are cuts—almost 3 percent cut in our military budgets and probably close to 4 to 5 percent for Homeland Security.

Budgets reflect values of administrations and priorities, and this administration, right now, is prioritizing our military and our national defense dead last.

We had the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in front of the Armed Services Committee last week, and I showed them this chart, and I asked them: How can you tell the troops that you lead that this administration

prioritizes our military and national defense over other missions of the Federal Government?

They couldn't give a really good answer because there is no good answer. If you look at this chart, if you look at the Biden administration's budget, they are prioritized at the bottom.

This is a battle of ideas, and when we come back from the Fourth of July recess, we are going to have this battle. I know I have colleagues, Democrats and Republicans—I have spoken to many on both sides of the aisle—who fundamentally disagree with this—fundamentally disagree with this.

You might remember last summer we had a debate when Senator SANDERS brought forth his defund the Pentagon amendment. That is what he called it. At the height of defunding the police, we had Senators saying we are going to now defund the Pentagon—15 percent across-the-board cuts to the military. That is what Senator SANDERS wanted.

By the way, Senator SCHUMER was a cosponsor of that.

And now they are in charge here, the majority leader, the chairman of the Budget Committee, and in many ways they are getting what they wanted—almost 3 percent cut to our military.

I guarantee it is not what the American people want; it is not what my constituents want; and I don't think it is what the vast majority of U.S. Senators want.

So we are going to battle this. We are going to battle this, and I am going to ask my Senate colleagues on both sides of the aisle to work with me to reject this. We need to reject this. We shouldn't prioritize our military dead last, which is what the Biden administration and, unfortunately, some of my colleagues here are doing.

I would like to end by just noting that tomorrow is actually another anniversary. We were talking about the Fourth of July, but June 25 is the 71st anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean war, which was June 25, 1950.

Unfortunately, not enough Americans, in my view, have a lot of knowledge of the Korean war. It is even called the forgotten war. I don't think it should be called the forgotten war. It should be called the noble war because Americans went to a place they didn't even know to defend freedom, which they did after a hard, difficult, violent struggle.

But in the summer of 1950, we lost thousands and thousands of young Americans, young American soldiers, young American servicemen. Why?

Because they were not prepared to fight. We went from 1945, having probably the most formidable military in the history of the world, to 5 years later—because of defense cuts, because of lack of leadership by civilian and military leaders in the United States—a military that could not fight, a military where we lost thousands of young American soldiers because they weren't ready because budgets had been gutted.

We can never allow that to happen again, and as we head into the Fourth

of July weekend to celebrate the Fourth of July and our hard-fought freedoms and liberty, we need to look at this budget, come back here and say to the President and others: We are not—we are not going to prioritize the national security of our Nation last.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. KING. Madam President, I rise to talk about a moral obligation and a national security obligation.

We are leaving Afghanistan after 20 years, the longest war in the country's history. During the entirety of that 20 years, there were brave people in Afghanistan—Afghanistan people—who helped us, who were translators, who were guides, who assisted us in the struggle against terrorism and in the struggle against the Taliban.

And as we leave, those people are in grave danger. The Taliban has made no secret of the fact that they are in grave danger. They have already started killing them.

If we leave without providing for the safety of those people, providing them a way to maintain their lives, it will be a stain on this country that will exist for generations.

Not only is it a moral and ethical obligation, though, it is a national security obligation because if we don't take care of the people who took care of us, who is going to come to our aid the next time? Who is going to come to the aid of the Americans who turn their backs on those that risk their lives on behalf of this country? The answer is no one.

So this is not only an ethical and moral obligation, this is a matter of national security in terms of our standing in the world and our ability to work with allies and others against adversaries of this country and other countries in the world.

The average time, I am told, it now takes to process the paperwork for one of the people whom we are trying to get out of Afghanistan through the special visa program is 600 days. We are going to have a military presence in Afghanistan less than 90 days. There is a mismatch there.

We have got to take steps to protect these people. Now, maybe its surging—we have talked about military surges; let's surge some paperwork people to get this work done faster. But I don't believe we are going to be able to do that.

Now, by the way, I am not saying we open the door to everyone—there are 18,000 people on their list; that is not to mention their families—that we just open the door and say everybody come here because, as we know, Afghanistan has been the home to very dangerous terrorist groups, al-Qaida, ISIS, and others.

So we do have to have some processing, but we have to be able to process these people in a way that protects